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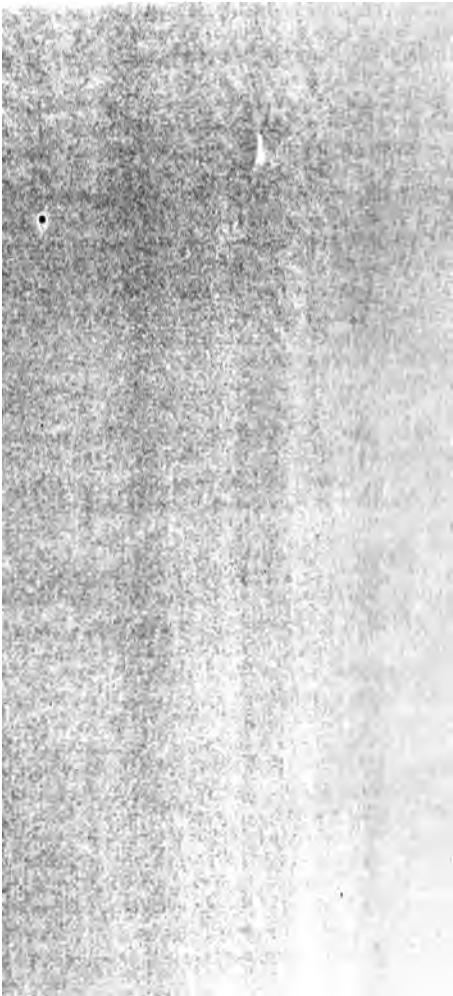
**HARRIET RYAN ALBEE**











*"So it happened that as a girl I saw a good deal of the sick."*

# HARRIET RYAN ALBEE

## A Memorial Sketch

JAMES DE NORMANDIE, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE FIRST CHURCH, ROXBURY, BOSTON

BOSTON

GEORGE H. ELLIS, PRINTER, 272 CONGRESS STREET

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AN  
INTRODUCTORY WORD.

SOON after Harriet Ryan Albee died, some of her friends wished me to write an account of her life and work. I gathered from a few who knew her well, and who had watched with deep interest her fine management of the Channing Home, what material I could. I took from it what notes I wanted to use.

Years passed on: no one offered to take the responsibility of publication, and the material was mislaid and lost.

Two years ago my friend, Mr. James M. Barnard, who at the age of eighty is restless unless each day finds some service for humanity performed, who knew Harriet Ryan well, and who knew the whole history of the Channing Home, begged me to fulfil the promise of long ago. I

had some notes, I had my own memory of her intimate friendship, and the help of Mr. Albee, who had written down from her lips all she could tell of herself and her mission.

So after nearly thirty years the story is here briefly told. To Mr. Barnard belongs all the credit.

JAMES DE NORMANDIE.

45 LAMBERT AVENUE, BOSTON,

May 2, 1901.

I.

**THE INHERITANCE.**



Noble by heritage,  
Generous and free.

*Henry Carey.*



**H**ARRIET RYAN was born in Boston on the 5th of March, 1829. Her father was an Irishman, who kept a variety store in Halifax, the home of her mother, who was a French woman; and they were prosperous. The finer traits that we are accustomed to ascribe to these two peoples, the Irish wit and the French grace and vivacity, seemed to unite in her.

One day, while they were at church, the store was burned, the fire carrying away all their possessions. They moved to Brewster's Island in Boston Harbor, where the father found employment in blasting rocks, until by an explosion he was injured and left a helpless invalid for eleven years. Soon after this accident their home was in Province Street, where Harriet was born, and where began her acquaintance with the incurable.

These were hard times for hungry mouths and a crippled father. The mother earned a little by sewing, two half-sisters brought all their savings

home, and by the closest economy kept the family together. Harriet was about twelve years old when she overheard a sad conversation between her mother and a young girl whose sister was at the Massachusetts General Hospital, and for whom there was no longer hope nor a bed. The girl earned two dollars a week, and would gladly pay a dollar and a half to any one who would take care of the invalid ; but she was such a sufferer, and required so much care, that she had to go from place to place, for every one wearied of her. Harriet's mother said she could never take care of the sick for money, money would never pay any one for such care ; but she would try what she could do for the sake of the Master. So the sick girl came with her young sister, and Harriet used to wait upon them a great deal ; and, if she got tired or looked out of temper, her mother would ask, " Do you find it so hard to work for God ? " Another incurable for the little ministering spirit ! Only twelve years old and spending all her days in a home-hospital, learning what sympathy and service meant, just for humanity's sake, just for love's sake. The inheritance and environment wrought together to

make her life a mission of unselfish devotion to those who had a future of only helplessness.

After that girl died, her mother took another, a Protestant and an incurable. With her Harriet learned a lesson of toleration and liberality which never left her. Then came still harder days. The mother could no longer help. A sister died of consumption, which early set its mark on Harriet, too. A younger brother was added to the incurables, and over him our young nurse watched tenderly for years.

The time had now come when, to remove the pinch of poverty, Harriet must be a bread-winner. She became maid to a lady on Beacon Street. Then she tried dressmaking, but the work tired and distressed her; and the physician said, if she were to live, she must have fresh air, and the fatal warning might be kept away for many a day. In hair-dressing she found for a time healthful and remunerative occupation. In going from house to house, she had fresh air and exercise, which gave her strength; and in homes of cultivation and comfort she had many drawn to her by her sweet, gentle, and graceful ways and by her sense of real

All the time her love of ministering to the sick only deepened. Whenever she found one lonely, poor, despairing of life, her heart was touched to care for her. Sometimes it was one on the bare floor of a miserable tenement house. Sometimes it was a young girl reared in abundance, and dying of consumption; for the shadow of that trouble resting upon her own home and life drew her only more strongly to such sufferers. Once she went into the very house on Province Street where her home had been. There were no children's voices there, only one poor sufferer and rats,—rats running over the house all night long; and Harriet said "she was always very afraid of rats." Yet there she went on her lonely vigils night after night for weeks, conquering her fears by bringing comfort and mercy to a departing spirit. To her patrons and friends she brought by day the story of her night watchings and her interest in the sick. They gave her money; and she took a large part of her own earnings, for she was now making a good deal, and her joy in earning it was only increased by her joy in giving it away.

One winter she had a very bad case, and told all about it to a young lady who was getting ready

to be married to a young man in New York. "I told her how different her married life might be if she in her home of luxury could only know how some others were living and suffering and dying, and begged her to go with me just once, and see that poor woman. 'But I am going to be married,' she said, 'and I have so much to do: how can I spare any time for that?' 'Just once,' I said, 'will not take very much time.' So she went." Her eyes were opened to a world of poverty and suffering she had never known anything about before, and thereafter her heart and her purse were open to Harriet Ryan. "She was not frivolous at heart," Harriet said of her, "only by custom." How much there is of this frivolity by custom, where, as soon as the heart is directed to better things, it finds joy in them !

Harriet Ryan's first effort, after she had found a poor incurable, wretched, and dying creature, was to get some respectable boarding-house; but it was so hard. Such places were few. It was a most mercenary bargain, and there was no heart-care given to the sick. So she had to go herself and see that they were not neglected, and many times to prepare for them their three meals a day.

At the very beginning there was one young girl who won her heart. She had been very respectable, as was learned from her letters after her death, one of that unbroken procession through the ages, coming from some sweet home, and losing itself and all its former companionships in the loneliness and darkness of these city streets, like a star falling from its heavenly orbit. Harriet went to her three times daily for three weeks, and then, after her own work was done in homes of luxury, went to watch with this unfortunate incurable all night. It was one winter just at the time of some fashionable assemblies. The weather was stormy; and she would leave the beautiful houses where she had been making others ready for the gay companies, go to that miserable room, and, all wet and dripping, throw herself on a mattress by the sufferer's side. "When she was dying, she prayed for me," Harriet said. "Oh! so many and beautiful prayers; and I know her sickness was blest to me, for all my after success came from it. I had more comfort in that case than in any since; for no one ever knew of it, and it seemed like working just for God."

"So it happened," Harriet says, "that as a girl

I saw a good deal of sickness." It was her inheritance and her environment from a child. It was the voluntary occupation of her mother: it was her daily conversation, and the art — before the time of so many trained nurses, these latter-day saints of our civilization — of treating the sick wisely, tenderly, sympathetically, grew with her growth. They, too, were to her the children of God. She had no questions to ask about their past lives, no glance of condemnation, no suggestion of greater holiness, no aversion from the most disagreeable tasks, only a passionate longing to give to some incurable a happy issue out of all her troubles, and a peaceful surrender to the judgment and love of the heavenly Father.

As that frail figure, made brave by the courage of love, her fair countenance even then touched by the hectic flush, bent over these wan and wasting lives she had gathered from the abodes of wretchedness, there went up from every one a grateful prayer for her who had been born into such an inheritance of helpfulness.



II.

**THE MISSION.**



Make channels for the streams of love,  
Where they may broadly run ;  
And love has overflowing streams  
To fill them every one.

*Trench.*



**W**HEN Harriet Ryan was about nineteen years old, and motherless for three years, her mission seemed to her very clear. Like all young girls, she said she had thoughts of a home of her own ; but into all her fancies of that home came always the plan of a room or two set apart, like the rooms in her mother's house, for the care of the sick. This wish never left her. When she had with some of her family one pretty room for herself, she could not rest until she took a poor sick girl to share it with her ; but this was not very agreeable to the others, who said, if she persisted in this, they would seek another home. Instead of giving up the one incurable, she took another, who for want of care and cleanliness was in a most repulsive state ; and Harriet needed more room, and somebody to help her. Some ladies whom she had interested were willing to aid, and her own family, too, if only their home were not turned into a hospital ; but it was not easy to find a place. No one wanted to take incurables.

"I have tried in vain," she said, "to find a place for that poor woman to board. So I think I must do as the Little Sisters of the Poor do,—find a room and take care of her myself. I cannot bear to think of her dying there with no protection against the rats but her stick, and she will soon be too feeble to use even that." "Do, Harriet," said a friend, "and I will pay the rent." Immediately the two started in search of a room. It was weary work. Nobody wanted a poor old, miserable, filthy, dying woman in any of the innumerable rooms which the roofs of Boston covered. They were much in earnest, but they had to give it up. No one would let a room for such a purpose.

As Harriet was returning one day to her own home, which was in Channing Street, she chanced to notice the then unoccupied vestry of Dr. Channing's church; and it occurred to her that perhaps it might be obtained for her purpose. The next day she saw her friend, and told her the plan, walking up and down Essex Street for hours, which was in those days their street of deliberation, counsel, and pleasant, heartfelt talks. All night she pondered it, and then went to friend

after friend. To some it seemed a large, wild undertaking for a girl so young: some warned, some encouraged, some offered to pay the rent and money for furnishings. No task is too hard when behind it is a great heart of love for humanity; and it was agreed that the vestry should be secured if possible, and Harriet Ryan bounded with joy at the thought of that arched room with its row of beds for the patients.

In a few days' success came, and the lower room of the vestry was engaged for one year at a rent of one hundred dollars. New difficulties then arose. Some necessary repairs and alterations must be made to fit it for the new purposes. Where was the money to come from? The same question confronted Harriet every year thereafter in the management of her home, and the solution became familiar and assured to her. Boston is always ready to help any humane interest which has the right person to conduct it; and it was Harriet Ryan's good fortune to find the givers, for they had faith in her. For a while she was perplexed; but, following her usual round of hair-dressing, one morning she entered a home on Chestnut Street, one of those beautiful homes where,

amidst the luxuries of life, the heart is kept full of love and kindness and generosity, and where is realized the answer to every prayer in behalf of humanity. There she found a young woman whose enthusiasm for the new work was immediate.

There is no experience in life more joyous than when one who is working for a noble cause meets some person who, having riches, and looking above dress, jewelry, and fashion, gives gladly, gives constantly, gives generously, and finds the reward of higher interests.

To those who said, "That is too great an undertaking for so young, ignorant, and impractical a person," this lady replied : "But I have faith in her. Let her work her own way : she will accomplish what she begins. I have been occasionally where she goes all the time among the sick and the poor. They reverence her, and, if they had our means, would intrust her with the whole of it." This young lady influenced another lady to seek an interview with Harriet Ryan, and, after hearing the plan, gave her the first donation of money she had received for the institution which grew into the Channing Home, and at her death left three

thousand dollars to its permanent funds. From that moment Harriet never faltered in her purpose, and felt strong and the presence of a certain blessing upon the work. That work on its enlarged scale at once began. Dr. John N. Borland consented to take charge of the patients, and became not only the physician, but friend and director of the home ; and not a little of its success was due to his admirable judgment and management. Among the few of the earliest friends and helpers of the home, still active in all helpful ministries, whether literary or philanthropical, an intimate friend of Harriet Ryan, a physician to the home almost at its beginning, and now the president of its officers, is Dr. Samuel A. Green, of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Harriet was surprised to see what a personal interest every one took who became acquainted with the project. It seemed to happen to all who began to help her with money or work that their hearts soon followed, and their names became something more than the signature to a subscription paper. They thought they loved the object; but, really, it was more the person, as many a lover finds all at once a new interest

in what his beloved is doing. Harriet Ryan's love inspired love.

Meantime the funds grew rapidly. One lady put into Harriet's hands five hundred dollars she had collected by personal solicitations, meeting with some rebuffs and more welcomes; and this sum was augmented daily until at the end of three weeks the room was in good condition, comfortably furnished for six patients, and a thousand dollars in hand to meet the future.

That vestry room was already very dear to many in Boston by sacred associations. Here Dr. Channing and his friends had moved and spoken. Here Washington Allston had painted and dreamed of fairer pictures than his pencil ever drew. Here were celebrated many pleasant reunions of distinguished men and women of the Unitarian household. And now the building was to receive a new and final consecration ere the wave of successful trade should undermine its walls and obliterate the images of religion, of art, and of philanthropy.

All things were at last ready for the guests who were to be bidden from garret and cellar. Harriet went to find the forlorn creature already

spoken of, whose feeble life was a struggle with destitution, and with hungry rats eager for what death should leave upon her withered bones. She went with a light heart, ready to bring some faint relief to her wearied spirit. She mounted the stairs, and entered the room to find her warm with life but dead. She took her to the new abode. Thus departed the first patient and essential founder of Channing Home. But there were not wanting those who, though not in the vale, were entering its shadow ; and in three or four days the beds were full. The home had no name, but came naturally to be called the Channing Street Home from its situation. The form in which its charities were to be administered was outlined in a circular letter addressed to the charitable citizens of Boston. The plan of its internal management was not drawn up in any circumlocution office, only in the large heart of her who did the work which each new day brought with it. Two hired women did the housekeeping and nursing by day ; and at night Harriet Ryan relieved them, still following her usual occupation. Most of the food was cooked in the home ; but every evening for several months

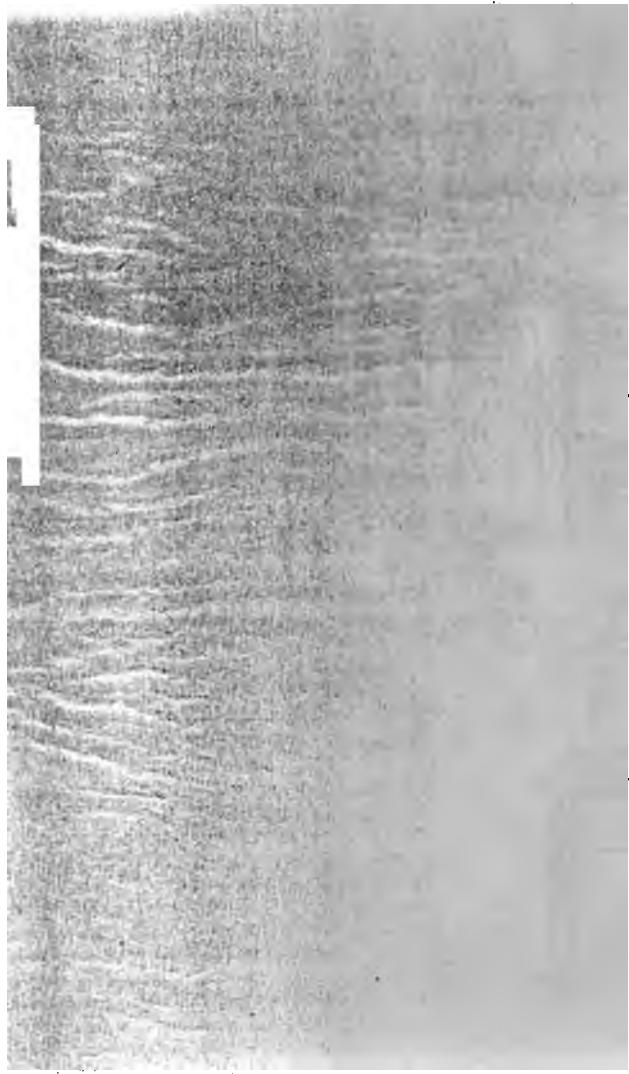
Harriet went to wait her turn, in the long row of customers and beggars at the entrance to the kitchen of Parker's Hotel, for a gallon of soup for her household's next dinner. Could any philanthropy fail with such a founder and director? Thus the domestic economy was simple, but sufficient; and the few wants were a mine of wealth.

There had been, up to this time, no place in Boston for the care of such cases as this home was designed to meet; and a patient who had received treatment at the Massachusetts General Hospital must, if her disease were chronic, leave her place for other sufferers, and, if she were a poor woman without a home, must go out with no prospect except of awaiting her death in a garret or at the almshouse. When Harriet Ryan found that her love of ministering to this class had really established a home and won the hearts of many friends and donors, her joy found expression in tears of gratitude and new consecration to her









"I am so engrossed in the bonie that I cannot bear to go out  
of an errand, it seems to me so like the will of God."

Flannickt. My dear

III.

**THE CHANNING HOME.**



I wandered lonely where the pine-trees made  
Against the bitter East their barricade,  
    And, guided by its sweet  
Perfume, I found, within a narrow dell,  
The trailing spring flower tinted like a shell  
    Amid dry leaves and mosses at my feet.  
  
As, pausing, o'er the lonely flower I bent,  
I thought of lives thus lowly, clogged, and pent,  
    Which yet find room,  
Through care and cumber, coldness and decay,  
To lend a sweetness to the ungenial day  
    And make the sad earth happier for their bloom.

*Wbittier.*



**T**HE Channing Home was opened on a Wednesday in May, 1857. The following Sunday, Dr. Gannett and some officers of his society called to look at it; and, after they saw what the mission really was and the interesting and devoted young woman who had thrown her whole life into it, they voted her the use of the room free of rent. A rapidly enlarging circle of rich and loving friends came to Harriet's help, and soon the seven patients had to make place for five more.

No room is large enough for all the poor and destitute incurables which a soul like hers finds out in the alleys and lowly abodes of a great city. It is as when, on a wintry day, you throw some crumbs to a bird, which flies away and returns with a bevy, or as when you bestow an alms upon a poor child in the street and a score of beseeching ones hangs around you.

Sainte-Beuve says : " I have read in a book that

a poor bird which had been battered and beaten to the ground by a tempest was once picked up by a charitable and powerful creature, who healed its broken wing as God himself might have done, after which the bird returned to the home of the birds in the sky and among the storms. The healer heard no more from him, and said to himself, ‘Where is gratitude?’ But one day he heard a sharp tapping at the window, and opened it. God had answered his inquiry. The bird had brought another wounded bird, dragging his broken wing, and at the point of death.”

It was in some such way that Harriet Ryan found out the sick and hopeless. One whom she nursed brought another; and the good news that there was some one to love them, some one to nurse them, some one to pity and comfort them, spread as of old the gospel of Jesus through the villages of Palestine.

Boston is always interested in philanthropy; that is popular and fashionable here. Perhaps no city in the world gives so much in proportion to its means, and so quickly, willingly, constantly. Boston is always giving, sometimes without due judgment; but whenever there comes a person

who shows that he can do well some deserving work of humanity, many generous hearts hasten to his aid. Harriet Ryan soon became the friend of many wealthy women who neither wished to hoard their wealth nor spend it wholly in their own gratification ; and she was able to show them a better way, which they gladly followed. At first she won them by her personal charms, then she held them by her utter unselfishness, by her devotion, by her rare faculty of doing well what she wanted to do. The work made her happier and more radiant. There shone in her countenance the joy of one who felt the faithful performance of a task. She looked until she found the good side of those suffering, and then it was always easy, as she said, "to amuse and entertain the good." She had found the true refuge of all saints, and felt it no uncertain thing to trust to the help of God. She did not much relish self-reliance, and one time, when the conversation was upon Emerson's doctrine of self-reliance, said she should rather be "weakly God's than strongly her own "; and she went on her way with a glad heart, for she said "she did not know what people did who couldn't *hum* when they walked the streets."

The first hope and the last refuge of every charitable, philanthropical and religious enterprise is a fair. It calls forth an interest from some who cannot be aroused in any other way ; it makes a great but rather acceptable toil for a few ; it gives publicity to the cause ; it adds to charity, sociability ; it leads most persons to a forced generosity greatly beyond their intentions, and it permits some pious persons to gamble in many mild ways, for the sake of Christ. In 1859 the friends of Channing Home prepared for a grand fair. They were themselves of so much social prominence, and so generous in all the humanities, that it was easy to call forth a hearty response. No appeal seems to have been unheeded ; and this fair was unique in the fine quality of its literary contributions, for those were living then who had given such pre-eminence in New England, and, in America, to Boston as a centre of letters, and the liberal movement in religion, which under Dr. Channing emphasized so strongly the philanthropical side of life, was enough to summon their gifts to any work which had so distinguished a support.

Dr. Frothingham, the minister of the First

Church, the poet-preacher, sent the following lines :—

#### THE HOME FOR DESTITUTE AND INCURABLE WOMEN.

Incurable ! Sweet Nature's healing forces  
Struck at the root, and wasted at the spring ;  
While Art and Science, with their grand resources,  
No means can study out, no rescue bring.

Incurable ! The fatal word is spoken  
That smites the faint heart with its flat despair ;  
Yet it is heard with spirit not all broken,  
If Gratitude and Faith their solace bear.

Waken that Thankfulness in Misery's daughters,  
Which, more than Expectation, holds us up ;  
Direct the flow of ever-living waters  
To fill the hollow of their earthen cup.

Nature and flesh, in sinking, do not alter  
The thoughts that rise beyond decay and pain ;  
And, when the leech's cunning fingers falter,  
Eternal hands the inward life sustain.

Sharp the distress, as desperate the condition,  
Of those who here lie at the Beautiful Gate,  
And from the name of Him, the Great Physician,  
With patient eyes their whole deliverance wait.

That name is Mercy. Show your portion of it ;  
Aid your poor sisters in their sorest need ;  
And so join with Apostle and with Prophet,  
Who bore its message and fulfilled its deed.

Small is their hope but in the upper dwelling ;  
Too weak to labor, and too lame to roam :  
Let not the record that's on high be telling  
You grudged the weary feet a transient " HOME."

to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes the follow  
:—

#### THE PROMISE.

Not charity we ask,  
Nor yet thy gift refuse :  
Please thy light fancy with the easy task  
Only to look and choose.

The little heeded toy  
That wins thy treasured gold  
May be the dearest memory, holiest joy  
Of coming years untold.

Heaven rains on every heart,  
But there its showers divide,  
The drops of mercy choosing as they part,  
The dark or glowing side.

One kindly deed may turn  
The fountain of thy soul

To love's sweet day-star that shall o'er thee burn,  
Long as its currents roll !

The pleasures thou hast planned,  
Where shall their memory be  
When the white angel with the freezing hand  
Shall sit and watch by thee ?

Living, thou dost not live,  
If mercy's spring run dry ;  
What Heaven has lent thee wilt thou freely give,  
Dying, thou shalt not die !

He promised even so !  
To thee His lips repeat, —  
Behold, the tears that soothed thy sister's woe  
Have washed thy Master's feet !

And James Russell Lowell this beautiful poem :—

#### ALL SAINTS.

One Feast, of holy days the crest,  
I, though no churchman, love to keep,  
All Saints, — the unknown good that rest  
In God's still memory folded deep ;  
The bravely dumb that did their deed,  
And scorned to blot it with a name,  
Men of the plain heroic breed,  
That loved Heaven's silence more than fame.

Such lived not in the past alone,  
But thread to-day the unheeding street,  
And stairs to Sin and Famine known  
Sing with the welcome of their feet ;  
The den they enter grows a shrine,  
The grimy sash an oriel burns,  
Their cup of water warms like wine,  
Their speech is filled from heavenly urns.

About their brows to me appears  
An aureole traced in tenderest light,  
The rainbow-gleam of smiles through tears  
In dying eyes, by them made bright,  
Of souls that shivered on the edge  
Of that chill ford repassed no more,  
And in their mercy felt the pledge  
And sweetness of the farther shore.

And Ralph Waldo Emerson, these lines :—

“ Night dreams trace on memory’s wall  
Shadows of the thought of day,  
And thy fortunes as they fall  
The bias of the will betray.”

The fair was as remarkable in its results as in its literary and social support. It put fifteen thousand dollars into the treasury of the Channing Home.

The beneficence of this home of the tenderest care and sweetest sympathy made itself so soon and widely recognized that after two years the vestry of the Federal Street Church proved insufficient. But confidence that it was capable of sustaining itself had grown with its growth; and pleading calls for more room induced Harriet Ryan to remove to South Street, where it was formally incorporated under the name of the Channing Home.

The name was not selected with any deliberation or from any desire to unite with it the fame of the distinguished preacher, but it grew up very naturally from the neighborhood. It was the home on Channing Street, and it was always a *home* ruled throughout by the great love which had conceived the idea of its existence. Three years later a still more commodious home was demanded; and this was found on McLean Street, where Harriet devoted her remaining years to its management, and where it still carries on its benign work.

There is not much to say about the routine duties and service of a quiet home-hospital. The days go on much the same, and even the surprises have a certain likeness. It is the coming

of some new incurable, the look of wonder, inquiry, of despair, from those who have shared the love which sheltered them, and the faith which buoyed them up, as they faced the unknown; it is the sympathy rayed out to some one whose sufferings were a little greater than those of the others; it is the hanging of a new picture; it is the joy when some friend of the home sends a box of delicacies, or comes with words of encouragement, to whom they could tell their gratitude for the sweet soul who never wearied in her watchfulness; it is the kindly round of the physician; it is the felt silence which steals over them when some day they know that one of their inmates is being quietly borne to her last home; it is a moment's gleam of a fading hope.

There was a radiance in that home, seldom known, which came from self-forgetfulness, from self-sacrifice, from an entire consecration, as if for that work Harriet Ryan had been born. "I am so engrossed in the home," she said, "that I cannot bear to go out of an errand, it seems to me so like 'the will of God'; and I have sometimes wished that I enjoyed my work less,—

it would have seemed more like the performance of a duty. How could one help being happy in being allowed to convey so much comfort to others?"

She had gained such a victory over herself that even the most repulsive offices were done without any manifestation of their disagreeableness. "There was one patient," she says, "I had to pray to overcome my repugnance to." She was happy, even when her zeal to help overleaped her judgment. "What do you think I did?" she exclaims one day, in ecstasy. "I am afraid to meet the doctor this afternoon. I took a poor sick *man*, whose wife died with me a short time since, and put him in my room. He can live but a short time. He was lying on the floor in a most miserable condition, with nobody to do the least or most necessary service for him. He could have gone to the almshouse, but he had struggled through the most bitter poverty for the sake of being buried with his wife and children. His appeal made me so wretched that I took him in, in spite of judgment; for, you know, that sweet

After a death in the home, she writes : “ It takes from us members of this family who have become dear to us by patient suffering. Faith teaches beautiful things concerning this solemn presence,— that death-pains are birth-pains into a bright and happy world. I shall be glad when the time comes for the curtain to drop on all the suffering that I see so constantly around me.”

IV.

THE SURPRISE OF LOVE.



**Millions of surprises.**

*Herbert.*

**Stony limits cannot hold love out.**

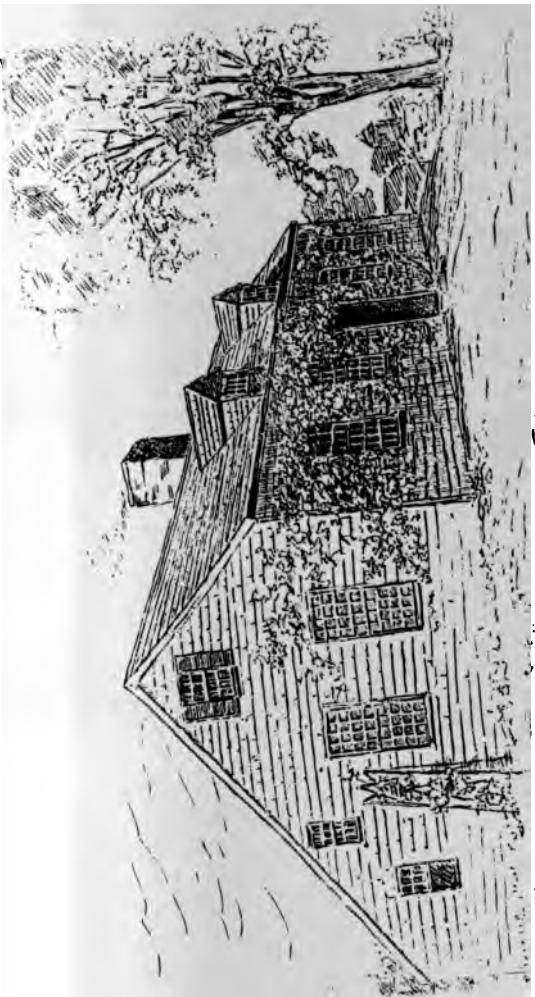
*Shakespeare.*





*Short Sketches*

: JEFFREY'S COTTAGE:





*"My home seems like Paradise to me."*



**T**HAT was no fault of Harriet Ryan's that one day she found another and a higher love than that of the Channing Home stealing over her heart. It was as great a surprise to her as it was to her friends, and it was only another mark of her fine womanliness. She wrote: "I hoped once that I had found my life-work, and that nothing but death should dissolve it; but now I am busy in changing the burden on others to bear. My conscience accuses me of faithlessness, and it makes me sad." She could not help having such moments; for some friends fell away, and rather reproached her. They thought her life had been bound to the Home by some indissoluble tie, and it seemed to them a fall from her consecrated mission.

They lost some faith in one who had seemed to them full of the divinest charity, that was a sweet light on her face as from a newly opened door in the heavens; but that other love was no

less divine, and no sweeter or more radiant light ever shone than from the mother's face.

While visiting with friends at Chicopee, Mass., Harriet met Mr. John Albee, who had been preaching for a few months in the Unitarian church of that town. There were walks together and rides on horseback, and the secret flame which has its mysterious origin among the supernatural things began to glow openly. "He seemed to me," she says, "like a magnet, without being able to specify what was the charm." Others had been able very easily to do this. Then it seemed a long time between the rides. Life began to have a new and strange meaning; and then, too, came stealing over her occasionally a little throb of regret, as the involuntary chiding of the nun turning aside from her vow. "I thought there was no end to the pleasant things of to-day. But another state of things awaited me upstairs. A patient was dying. Oh, how out of tune it seemed! It was truly a revolting case. I stood a moment reluctant, but remembered God loves a cheerful giver, so laid aside all my earthly joys, and spent the night watching a sight ever new,—the body yielding up the spirit.

How could I live without faith? And the love of God makes the most abject body sacred. The soul within may be a blessed one. Goodness alone can make us worthy temple for the Holy Spirit. The most despised among men was the Holy One."

John Albee had a few acres by the sea in the old town of Newcastle, N.H., where he labored and studied and thought and wrote; and the house was one of the historical homes of New England. What is now a fishing village and a summer watering-place was once the seat of government and aristocracy of the early settlement at the Piscataqua. Hither came some of the wealthier families from the Isles of Shoals, when the Indians had been driven farther inland. Just across Little Harbor had been built the Manor Hall of John Mason, as early as 1623; and here were the homes of Cranfield, Barefoot, Story, Sheafe, Atkinson, Jaffrey, and others who were prominent in official, mercantile, literary, and social life in their day, and before the settlement rapidly crept up to Strawberry Bank. On the south part of the island is the Jaffrey cottage, now about two hundred and twenty-five years

old. It was built by a leading man in the Piscataqua settlement, whose name it bears; and it remains now substantially as he built it and left it.

The old mansion has seen its contemporaries fall away, and generation after generation pass on. Business and fashion, wealth and official station, were lured to the more flourishing town of Portsmouth; and for many years few passed through the fishing village, to enjoy the beauties of the shore beyond, to be lulled by the note of the sea, to learn of its rest and unrest, or to feel the friendly companionship of the light-houses, as they sent out from every point their guiding rays over the deep.

Then came a day when in many things we began to turn back to the choice of our fathers. The dust-laden travellers of summer from our heated inland may be glad of the sea anywhere; but one can go a good while along our coast before finding any views more charming, extensive, satisfying, than those from the site of the old Jaffrey cottage at Great Island.

To John Albee the sight and love of the sea were as dear as to George Jaffrey, and as neces-

sary a condition of healthful and literary activity ; and, with great rejoicings, he came into possession of the old estate, and hither he brought his bride from the Channing Home. To her, also, the place at once became very dear. "My home," she writes, "seems like Paradise to me." When, in later years and failing strength, she went to the Bahamas, she said : "The view is almost as enchanting as Newcastle. I am perfectly enchanted with the climate, with the town, with the trees, with the sea, and with the darkies."

She loved the domesticities of life. Here were born to her four children, and here two of them were laid to rest by the apple-trees which blossomed close to the sea.

Into this home she brought that same gentleness, that gracious bearing, and that radiant charity which made her just as dear to many friends in Portsmouth as in Boston.

In winter she went to the Channing Home, whose activities and mercies she still directed all the year ; and, when spring came, she returned like the bird to her nest. Each summer, as we noticed her strength was less and the flush on her cheeks was deeper, the graciousness of her

spirit increased. If the time was short, it seemed as if she were restless to fill it all up with sweetness and love.

Two summers, and those near the end, were particularly joyous to her. She had literary picnics at the old cottage by the sea. Hither came every other week friends and guests from Portsmouth, Boston, Rye Beach, and the Navy Yard, to an entertainment the very simplest, on the lawn or the rocks, or in the large Council Chamber which had witnessed so many controversies and sage discussions in the days of establishing a new world; while the literary banquet was the finest. To one of these Longfellow sent by Mr. James T. Fields his "Lady Wentworth" before publication in the *Atlantic*, the scene of which was laid in the old Wentworth house, just across Little Harbor. To another, Harriet Beecher Stowe came, reading some chapters from "Oldtown Folks," then preparing for the publishers. It was a picture never to be forgotten,—the old council hall filled with a brilliant company; the popular authoress standing by the door-post; out in the little adjoining chamber the sweet sister of charity on her bed, convulsed at the witty pictures of the old days of New England life.

This was her last summer in the New Castle cottage. When the autumn days came on, she returned to the Channing Home. She, too, was an incurable.

A little while before the end she dictated this letter :—

“ *My Dear Friends,—* You whom I met when I had no money toward the Home, and who believed in me, I should like to take your hands, and thank you in words which must be among my last.

“ The Home has been a success. It has been in existence sixteen years, and is now on a firm foundation.

“ I hope Dr. Jackson’s words will be remembered, that this Home ‘may never be spoiled by any ambitious plans,’ which I earnestly commend to you as the perfect expression of my own wishes.

“ I love to recall the days of its beginning,— days of faith ; those beautiful concerts and meetings, which seemed a union of hearts and a time of good will between two different classes of society, the rich and the poor, making a double benefit, doing a larger work than I had ever planned or even dreamed of.

“ Those evenings were always occasions of great

happiness and joy to me: my best friends always gathered around me; and, feeling the love and confidence in which I was held, it became to me a fountain of impulse and strength. So I bid them farewell with regret.

"I have been told by physicians that the Channing Home is among the best of its kind in respect to its internal arrangements. In my younger days I did not fully appreciate the excellent arrangements suggested by Dr. Borland. But, as I went on, the plans became more clearly revealed in their excellent results, and, like all good things, had the source of happy development in themselves.

"I shall be glad if they so meet the approval of the friends of the Home that no great changes will be found necessary. The Home has never done good by rule, but according to a present need. I should like to thank the Trustees for the harmony which has always existed between us. It has made the management easy and agreeable. I should like to thank the friends of the institution for their helping hands and hearts; but I must let this little expression be my all of thanks and farewell, lacking now that strength which in other days carried me through life with great joy and peace.

"SUNDAY, April 6, 1873."

The next month on the second day she died. It is interesting to see that every report of the Channing Home has a brief notice of what Harriet's intention and custom were concerning it, showing that her soul was still animating the place and her successors, as in the beautiful apostrophe of Achilles to Patroclus over the dead body of Hector : —

“ If in the melancholy shades below  
The flames of friends and lovers cease to glow,  
Yet mine shall sacred last ; mine undecayed  
Burn on through death, and animate my shade.”



V.

THE END.



Fair is her cottage in its place,  
Where yon broad water sweetly, slowly glides.  
It sees itself from thatch to base  
    Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she ; but, ah ! how soon to die!  
    Her quiet dream of life this hour may cease.  
Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
    To some more perfect peace.

*Tennyson.*



**P**ERHAPS it was because Harriet Ryan had seen so much of consumption in her own home, perhaps it was because she had always thought of its shadow resting upon herself, that from a child she longed to minister to those who were thus afflicted; and some said it was from breathing this atmosphere for years that her end was hastened.

In the home where she had tenderly cared for so many, loving hearts waited upon her until there was no longer need of watching.

You can never tell why Harriet Ryan Albee made charity so dear to others, unless it was because of the sweet breath of humanity which filled and overflowed from her own nature. What made her gracious personality you cannot tell, any more than you can paint the sparkle in the star or the fragrance in the rose. She made evident to others the joy and helpfulness of holiness.

She was always a devout Roman Catholic, but she was the only Roman Catholic I ever knew who was catholic. She would have said, with Angelique Arnauld, though not perhaps precisely in her sense, "I am of the church of all the saints, and all the saints are of my church." "God knows," she wrote once, when from home, "how I hate to live without you! but my soul is starving for its accustomed food. I felt it a great privilege to assist at mass to-day, though the music kept my tears dropping all the time. What to you is an idol is life to me. Next winter I hope will find less care on our minds, more money in our pockets, and lots of love in our hearts."

Writing to me from the Bahamas, she said, "Heaven will want something to me, unless your house is next door to mine." And one day, saying to her, "This is all well enough for you, Harriet, in this life; but of course you never can expect to see John in another world," she replied, "Oh, I know there is some little corner door by which all you Unitarians will get in."

Much as she loved the ceremonies and worship of her own church, when duty called, like Saint

Francesca Romana, she could lay aside her prayer-book and mass, and find her worship in some sweet work of mercy.

She had known so much of poverty that she grew up to have a heart of truest gratitude for the smallest gift. "I always thought poverty beautiful," she writes, "where cleanliness and virtue dwell with it. I saw it in my childhood with a holy mother, who made every little gift that came to her hearth a jubilee; but I must say it was the most harassing friend I ever met."

She had a gracious and winning way of expressing her gratitude, which made you want to do something more for her. "I will put the warmth of love accompanying it into my heart," she said upon receiving a gift. And again, "I shall not thank you in words for the health and cheerfulness received through you, but will breathe my gratitude to the throne of God, to bless you in your effort to train your children so you can render back to him your jewels fit companions for his court."

She had a rare genius for friendship, because she never could dissociate affection from entire confidence. Some love you, and still withhold

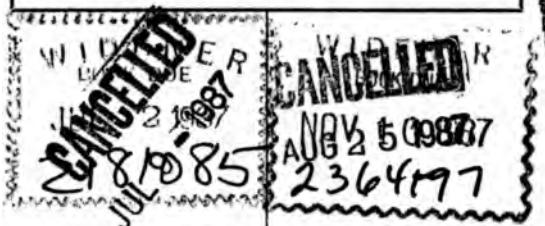
much from you. She was not so. She was not satisfied to bring only one good gift to the altar of friendship : she brought all. And so she called out the truest and best qualities in others,—not that it made angels of dust, but permitted their faults to run through the veil of charity. All friendship to her seemed to rest upon interest in her work, not in herself. “I value your friendship,” she wrote. “It astonishes me, only that I recognize in it the work for which I’d freely give my life. I could not bear such lavished love on my poor unworthy self.”

Here was a life which showed to us that the call to saintliness has not ceased, and that its possibilities have not died out.

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